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**INDEPENDENT ADVISORY GROUP RELEASES NEW REPORT ON  
ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS IN THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER REGION**

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*A new bilingual report from the Good Neighbor Environmental Board recommends stepped-up chemical emergency preparedness, strategic allocation of scarce water supplies, and heightened energy-efficiency measures for the border region.*

Strong federal support remains critical to improving the environment along the U.S.-Mexico border, according to a new report released today by an independent expert advisory group called the Good Neighbor Environmental Board.

"Pollution, congestion, and scarce water supplies continue to plague large portions of our nation's southern border," said Board Chair Judith Espinosa at a press conference announcing the release of the report. "Protecting the health of community residents and the fragile ecosystems that surround them must remain a federal priority. Not only will the border region benefit, so will the entire nation."

The *Fifth Report of the Good Neighbor Environmental Board to the President and Congress of the United States* recommends that the federal government take nine steps to protect the region's water resources and air quality, as well as safely manage the growing number of hazardous materials found there:

Water

1. Support U.S.-Mexico discussions concerning compliance with water treaty obligations and encourage greater binational cooperation directed at more effective surface water supply management.
2. Support efforts for increased collection and sharing of data about border region groundwater resources and encourage greater binational cooperation in border groundwater management.
3. Support partnerships at all levels that promote strategic watershed principles and watershed management.

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#### Air

4. Establish formalized binational coordination and cooperative planning among U.S. and Mexican energy and environmental agencies to minimize adverse air quality impacts from power plants in the border region, while addressing binational energy needs.
5. Promote energy conservation and development of alternative sources of energy in order to minimize impacts to air quality.
6. Provide federal financing to remedy air quality health problems exacerbated by inadequate transportation infrastructure in the region. Such funding should be allocated to a binational entity capable of taking remedial action at the project level.

#### Hazardous Materials

7. Direct financial, technological and human resources to assist local communities, including tribal communities, to prepare for and respond to hazardous materials incidents.
8. Increase awareness and training in the areas of hazardous waste identification, storage, and export for final disposition.
9. Increase the availability of emergency response equipment and personnel.

The Good Neighbor Environmental Board was created in 1992 to advise the U.S. President and Congress on good neighbor environmental practices along the southern border of the United States. The border region stretches from the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico and includes the states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. Under Executive Order, responsibility for its management was delegated to the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

For more information about the Board and its report, contact the Designated Federal Officer for the Board, Elaine Koerner, EPA Office of Cooperative Environmental Management, Office of the Administrator, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20460. Tel: (202) 564-1484. E-mail: [Koerner.Elaine@epa.gov](mailto:Koerner.Elaine@epa.gov).

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